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All persons are by nature free and independent, and have certain natural and unalienable rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, of acquiring, possessing, and protecting property, and of pursuing and obtaining safety and happiness.

-- Article 1, Section 1, New Jersey State Constitution

The coming Constitutional debate

By Stephen J. Markman

The resolution of emerging constitutional controversies, such as the privilege or immunity clause and transnationalism, will determine whether the Constitution of 2030 bears any resemblance to the Constitution of 1787 – the Framers' Constitution that has guided this nation for most of its first two centuries and has rendered it the freest, most prosperous, and most creative nation in the history of the world.

Proponents of a "21st century constitution" or a "living constitution" aim to transform our nation's supreme law beyond recognition – and with a minimum of public attention and debate. Indeed, if there is an overarching theme to what they wish to achieve, it is the diminishment of the democratic and representative process of American government. It is the replacement of a system of republican government, in which the constitution is largely focused upon the architecture of government in order to minimize the likelihood of abuse of power, with a system of judicial government, in which substantive policy outcomes are increasingly determined by federal judges. Rather than merely defining broad rules of the game for the legislative and executive branches of government, the new constitution would compel specific outcomes.

Yes, the forms of the Founders' Constitution would remain – a bicameral legislature, periodic elections, state governments – but the important decisions would increasingly be undertaken by courts, especially by federal courts. It will be the California referendum process writ national, a

process by which the decisions of millions of voters on matters such as racial quotas, social services funding, and immigration policy have been routinely overturned by single judges acting in the name of the Constitution – not the Framers' Constitution, but a "constitution for our times", a "living constitution", resembling, sadly, the constitutions of failed and despotic nations across the globe.

Since shortly after the Civil War, the privileges or immunities clause of the 14th Amendment has been understood as protecting a relatively limited array of rights that are a function of Federal citizenship, such as the right to be heard in courts of justice and the right to diplomatic protection. The Supreme Court in the *Slaughterhouse Cases* (1873) rejected the argument that the clause also protects rights that are a function of state citizenship, asserting that this would lead to federal courts serving as a "perpetual censor" of state and local governments. This decision has served a bulwark of American Federalism.

Proponents of a 21st century constitution seek additional federal oversight of state and local laws. Their strategy is to refashion the privileges or immunities clause as a new and essentially unlimited bill of rights within the 14th Amendment. The practical consequences of this would be to authorize federal judges to impose an ever broader and more stultifying uniformity upon the nation.

For the 21st century constitutionalist, perhaps the greatest virtue of redefining the privileges or immunities clause is the prospect of transforming the Constitution from a guarantor of "negative liberties" into a charter of "affirmative government"

guaranteeing an array of "positive" rights. President Obama in a radio interview criticized the Warren Court of the 1950s and 1960s for not breaking "free from the essential constraints that were placed by the Founding Fathers in the Constitution...that generally the Constitution is a charter of negative liberties, says what the states can't do to you, says what the federal government can't do to you, but it doesn't say what the federal government or the state government must do on your behalf."

President Obama is correct. The Framers' Constitution defines individual rights in terms of what the government *cannot* do to you. For example, the government cannot engage in unreasonable searches and seizures, and therefore the individual has a constitutional right not to be subject to such searches and seizures. By contrast, the Framers' Constitution does not guarantee rights to material goods such as housing, education, food, clothing, jobs or health care—rights that place a related obligation upon the state to obtain the resources from other citizens to pay for them.

Proponents of a 21st century constitution have many grievances with the individual rights premises of our Constitution – such as its old-fashioned conception of such rights as those to "life, liberty and property"; and the limited application of the equal rights clause to things that have been enacted by legislatures (as opposed to things that they *should have been required* to enact). Each of these "limitations" poses significant barriers to what 21st century constitutionalists hope to achieve in reconfiguring America. This explains their interest in employing the privileges or immunities clause, which seems to

them open-ended and susceptible to definition by judges at their own discretion.

As various advocates of a 21st century constitution have urged, a privilege or immunity might be interpreted to allow the invention of a host of new "rights," and thus be construed to guarantee social or economic equality. However pleasing this might sound to some people, there should be no mistake: adopting this interpretation will supplant representative decision-making with the decision-making of unelected, unaccountable and life-tenured judges. Should the privileges or immunities clause be used in this way, as a charter of positive rights, ours will become an America in which citizens are constitutionally entitled to their neighbors' possessions; in which economic redistribution has become as ingrained a principle as federalism and the separation of powers; in which the great constitutional issues of the day will focus on whether porridge should be subsidized and housing allowances reimbursed at 89 or 94 percent of the last fiscal year level; and in which a succession of new "rights" will be parceled out as people are deemed worth of them by berobed lawyers in the judiciary.

Prof. Harold Koh of the Yale Law School and now State Department Legal Counsel, is perhaps the leading proponent of what he calls "transnationalism," which he contrasts with the "nationalist philosophy" that has characterized American constitutional law for the last 220 years.

Transnationalists believe that international and domestic law [i.e. national law] are merging into a hybrid body of transnational law, while so-called nationalists persist in preserving a division between domestic and foreign law that respects the sovereignty of the United States. Transnationalists believe that domestic courts have a critical role to play in incorporating international law into domestic law, while so-called nationalists claim that only the political branches are authorized to domesticate [enact] international legal norms. Prof. Koh predicts that these disagreements will play out in future Supreme Court hearings, and that these appointments will be "pivotal" in determining the direction in which the jurisprudence of the U.S. proceeds.

In practice, transnationalism would legitimize reliance by American judges upon foreign law in giving

meaning to the U.S. Constitution; it would bind federal and state governments to international treaties and agreements that had never been ratified by the U.S. Senate much less enacted into law by the Congress; it would render both the domestic and international conduct of the U.S. increasingly beholden to the review and judgment of international tribunals in Geneva and the Hague; it would expose American soldiers and elected leaders to the sanctions of international law for "war crimes" and "violations of the earth"; and it would replace the judgments of officials representing the American people, and holding paramount the interests of the United States, with the judgments of multinational panels of bureaucrats and judges finely balancing the interests to the U.S. with those of other nations – including authoritarian and despotic governments – throughout the world.

Stephan Markman is a former U.S. attorney and Michigan Supreme Court Justice

-- Imprimis, April 2010

Rolling Stone Magazine on militias, GOA, NRA - 1995

"The second amendment ain't about duck hunting," Larry Pratt began. The crowd of 150 neo-Nazis and self-described Christian patriots laughed. Looking like a slightly rumpled accountant, Pratt, the executive director of Gun Owners of America, said every man should be able to own the military assault weapon of his choice - and form a militia to back up his rights.

It was October 1992, and the men - and they were all men - had traveled thousands of miles from more than 14 states, sometimes sleeping in their cars, to Estes Park, Colo. Some had already been to jail for their cause, and others were prepared to go. Although many of the participants had met before, this gathering was different. It marked the birth of the modern militia movement that would tie well-armed radicals to gun advocates in a right-wing national network. Sparked by the siege of Randy Weaver's cabin in the Idaho mountains two months earlier, the three-day strategy session was organized by Pete Peters, who pastors to members of a fringe religious group called Identity... Weaver, an Identity adherent and sometimes visitor to the white supremacist group Aryan nations, had been wanted for failure to appear on charges of selling two sawed-off

shotguns to a Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms agent. When federal marshals tried to arrest Weaver, a gunfight led to an 11-day siege that resulted in the death of federal marshal William Degan, and Weaver's son Samuel and wife, Vicki, who was killed by an FBI sharpshooter's bullet. Their worst suspicions of the government confirmed, the men who answered Peter's call encamped at Estes Park to figure out what to do next. Outside the YMCA meeting hall, a couple of plainclothes police officers kept watch. Inside, Pratt stood at the podium and peered out from behind his glasses. He confessed to the crowd of gun lovers that he wasn't a particularly good shot or an enthusiastic hunter. "I bought my first gun in 1968, during the riots in Washington, D.C." that followed the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.. At the time all he could buy was a shotgun. "If they'd had that assault rifle, so-called, for sale, and I'd seen that big old magazine there at the time, that's exactly what I would have bought."...

Guns were Pratt's focus, but they weren't the meeting's only topic. The audience listened to speakers who mixed calls for "Christian resistance" with warnings of concentration camps for "patriots." The men gathered in committees that issued reports with conclusions like, "Vigilante action is scriptural." Richard Butler, the aging chief of Aryan Nations, in Idaho's north woods, told the group, "I have to confess to you, I am a bigot."...

Peters warned the men "Now, I want you to understand what can happen to you speaking in my meetings. You know I'm labeled a white supremacist...I just don't want people to come in unaware."

Chris Temple, who is now a correspondent for an Identity newspaper, *Jubilee*, said "All of us in our groups...could not have done in the next 20 years what the federal government did for our cause [at the Weaver cabin] in 11 days in Naples, Idaho."

Temple argued that white supremacists should bury their differences with others on the far right and build a unified single-issue movement to oppose the federal government....

In particular it meant alliances with gun lobbyists like Pratt. Pratt recognized "the importance of having an armed militia able to organize quickly and effectively." But he also understood the need to work within the

In the beginning of change the patriot is a scarce man, brave, hated and scorned. When his cause succeeds, however, the timid join him, for then it costs nothing to be a patriot. – Mark Twain

mainstream. "I think that all gun laws are unconstitutional," Pratt said, "so we need leadership in the Congress to articulate our position."

The change in strategy signaled the transformation of the gun lobby. Organizations like GOA or even the National Rifle Association, which were devoted to the single issue of firearms, would become the leading edge of a far right, multi-issue assault on government institutions and democratic rights. The gun lobby would be at the center of a web of right-wing warriors.

Pratt made it clear that he considered the NRA a friend and an ally. Still, he criticized the King Kong-size lobby, with its claim of 3 million members and a \$100 million budget, for timidity: "The NRA is an organization that does a lot of good work. And I want to make sure that I make the record clear.... [But] for too long they tended to perceive the whole issue of firearms freedom as one of recreation, as one of the right to hunt."

Pratt noted that the NRA was beginning to pursue a broader and more hard-line strategy and that new board members had been elected who favored "a more aggressive approach." Change was happening, he said, it just "hasn't happened enough."

How fast and how far is a constant question for the NRA, one that is complicated by the militia movement....

The NRA's 1995 annual convention in Phoenix threw a spotlight on the tightrope the NRA is walking. There, only two of 14 moderate board members won seats.... Dave Edmundson, a former moderate board member, counted only five or six moderates on the 76-member board.

I asked T.J. Johnston, who was elected for the third year in a row, whether any NRA board members are militiamen. Johnston is a "commander" in the Orange County Corps, a group of about 1,000 men who stockpile food, water, guns, and medical supplies. (Johnston takes pains to point out it's not a militia because that would be against California law.)

"There are members of the board who take whatever measures necessary to defend themselves," Johnston answered. "If it involves joining a militia..." His voice trailed off. Is there room in the NRA for militia members, I wanted to know. "There is a lot of space," Johnston replied....

There are, of course, still NRA members primarily interested in programs for hunters and sports shooters. But the much-ballyhooed

conflict within the NRA between moderates and extremists in the leadership is almost wholly a media-concocted story. The political culture in the NRA has been so radicalized in recent years that bipartisan moderates have been virtually eliminated. The division now is between Republican Party hard-liners and a free-floating, militia-driven constituency....

After the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building, the NRA came under intense public criticism for fueling the kind of vicious anti-government sentiment that is believed to have been linked to the explosion. So at the Phoenix meeting, the NRA leadership made a particular effort to reverse any perception that the organization was associated with the militia movement or terrorism. The fact that Timothy McVeigh, the prime suspect in the bombing, was once a member of the NRA was never mentioned. Executive Director Wayne LaPierre publicly apologized for his letter calling ATF agents "jack-booted government thugs," a reference that prompted an outrage resignation letter from former President George Bush. LaPierre uttered the most widely reported words of the convention: "There is not, nor has there ever been, any room at the NRA for anyone who supports - or even fantasizes about - terrorism, sedition, insurrection, treason, conspiracy or any other unlawful activity. Period! End of story!"

But Tanya Metaksa, the executive director of the NRA's Institute for Legislative Action, gave the ILA's Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award to militia icon Richard Mack, sheriff of Graham County, Ariz., who filed suit against the Brady Act, arguing that the criminal checks required for the five-day waiting period on gun buyers were an imposition on local cops that the feds had no right to make. In 1994 a U.S. District Court judge ruled in his favor, although that decision was subsequently overturned. Five other county sheriffs are pursuing similar lawsuits with mixed results.

Mack has co-written two books and organized a Graham County militia to assist his 12 deputies. He has a firm belief that the Second Amendment means "the founding fathers of this nation meant for Congress, the president and all government authorities *never* to infringe on the rights of the people to keep and bear arms."

"Whether American citizens support the idea, damn the concept or deny its existence, the new world order conspiracy had been upon us for a long

time," the NRA award winner has written, repeating the paranoid scenarios that animate today's militia movement. He believes that the militia is every able-bodied male.

Militia fever broke out in earnest late in the meeting when an NRA member offered a resolution supporting the militia.

The leadership immediately offered a substitute resolution. It said: "The NRA does not approve or support any group activities that properly belong to the national defense or the police.

"The NRA strongly supports the Constitution...which guarantees the right of citizens to participate in militias for proper, lawful and constitutional purposes.

"Although the NRA has not been involved on the formation of any citizen militia units, neither has the NRA discouraged nor would the NRA contemplate discouraging exercise of any constitutional right."

After a half-hour of vigorous debate, the substitute resolution won.

The substitute resolution was simply a compendium of resolutions already on the NRA books, some apparently contradicting others.

While the NRA is the biggest player in terms of money and publicity, the gun lobby is in fact much broader, with tentacles that reach not only up into Congress but also out to the margins of American society that Identity believers and anti-government conspiracy theorists inhabit. In that sense, Larry Pratt is emblematic of today's gun lobby: He has one foot in the political mainstream and the other in the fringe.

Just how Pratt is helpful to allies in the mainstream was explained by T.J. Johnston. "I am a member of Gun Owners of America," Johnston told me as he stood outside the Phoenix convention center auditorium, handing out leaflets plugging his re-election to the board. "I support Larry Pratt. He leads the edge. He's out there in front, fighting hard. He is a very dedicated and aggressive individual," Johnston said, "and he jumps in with both feet... He can afford to be less pragmatic." Pratt, Johnston continued, "may drag the NRA kicking and screaming" along with him."

To Johnston, Pratt's organization is the cowcatcher at the front of the NRA's political train.

Pratt operates out of a modest suite in a Springfield, Va., office park. The operation spends more than \$1 million a year, about 1 percent of the size of the NRA's budget, and claims a

membership of about 140,000, which is less than 5 percent of the size of the NRA's. In addition to lobbying, GOA puts out videos. Prior to the 51 day siege near Waco, Texas, [in which 80 people perished] David Koresh showed one of GOA's videotapes to Robert Rodriguez, an [undercover] ATF agent who had infiltrated the Waco compound. The video "portrayed ATF as an evil agency that threatened the liberty of U.S. citizens," according to a Treasury Department report. Pratt argued in his 1990 book *Armed People Victorious* that professional law enforcement should be replaced by militias. "It is time that the United States," he wrote, "return to reliance on an armed people."

Blinding outrage over Waco has been a unifying force for those on the radical right. On the day the Oklahoma City federal building was bombed, Pratt was in Washington, D.C., for a demonstration at the FBI building on the second anniversary of the incineration of the Branch Davidian compound. Three days later Pratt flew to Branson, Mo., where he once again met up with Pete Peters and about 600 so-called Christian patriots for a unity session. They were there to continue what they had started years earlier at Estes Park: building a working alliance between Identity Christians and others who might be sympathetic to some of their goals. Pratt told the group that there was a connection between the Oklahoma bombing and the events in Waco. According to Michael Reynolds of Klanwatch, who described the event in an article he wrote for *Playboy*, Pratt said: "The government behaves as a beast. It did in Waco, and we have somebody, whoever it might have been, whatever group it might have been, assuming they can't rely on the Lord to take vengeance." The answer, Pratt counseled, was for everyone to arm themselves - it was God's order....

Congressmen, militia members, militant anti-abortion activists, radical anti-immigration advocates, Christian Identity believers, white separatists, gun lobbyists, the Christian Coalition, high-powered right-wing fund raisers - they're all entangled in a web of interlocking relationships. To a large degree, that's precisely what the Estes Park attendees sought to create.

It was Friday night, six weeks after the Oklahoma City explosion. Three hundred people in casual clothes and militia T-shirts sat in a convention center in Orlando, Fla., listening intently to speakers describe how the bomb

was part of a sinister government plot to take away their weapons.

The audience members were among the more than 2,000 people who attended Preparedness Expo '95. It was billed as a survivalist convention for those preparing for disasters, natural and man-made, but it was more than that. It was a place where America's gun advocates, militia members and political extremists could meet.

Larry Pratt was at the podium. "Don't let Handgun Control [Inc.] intimidate you by associating you with everything that they don't like, whether it be the militia or just an angry white man," he said. "After all, every time you read the founders, they say something that makes them sound like they were a bunch of militia types," because, Pratt continued, "that's exactly what they were."

Bo Gritz, 1992 presidential candidate of the far-right Populist Party, concluded that some official sitting in the basement of a Washington office was responsible for the [Oklahoma City] blast. The Vietnam veteran spat out his story as if giving final orders for a nighttime parachute drop behind enemy lines. Each man in the audience was a brother in arms, each one must be ready for the worst perfidy from the so-called commander in chief, bivouacked safely away by the Potomac.

Gritz then gave his definition of gun control: "Hitting the target with every shot."

On Sunday afternoon, Gritz returned to the stage to plug Larry Pratt. "Friends, its time to stop talking," Gritz said, "and it's time to start walking. I'm a life member of the NRA, but, friends, that ain't nothing. You get out there where somebody's really doing something. I want you to go out there and make sure you're part of the Gun Owners of America."

After the applause, everybody filed out of the room. About a dozen guys stopped by Pratt's table to sign up.

-- From "Armed and Dangerous (The NRA, Militias and White Supremacists are fostering a network of right-wing warriors)" by Leonard Zeskind, *Rolling Stone Magazine*, Nov. 2, 1995

'South Park' & the Informal Fatwa

By Ayaan Hirsi Ali

Last week Zachary Adam Chesser, a 20-year old Muslim convert who now goes by the name Abu Talhah Al-Amrikee, posted a warning on the

Web site RevolutionMuslim.com following the 200th episode of South Park in which many celebrities were satirized including the Prophet Muhammad who was heard once from within a U-Haul truck and a second time from inside a bear costume.

For this apparent blasphemy Mr. Amrikee warned that co-creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone "will probably end up" like Theo Van Gogh, the filmmaker who was brutally murdered in 2004 in Amsterdam for co-producing "Submission", a film that criticized the subordinate role of women in Islam, with me.

This raises the question: How much harm can Islamist fringe groups do in a free society? The answer is a lot. They killed Van Gogh. And the radical imam opposed to cartoons unflattering to Muhammed cost Danish businesses an estimated \$170 million in 2006, not including the cost of rebuilding destroyed property and protecting the cartoonists.

There is a basic principle in Islamic scripture - unknown to most not-so-observant Muslims and most non-Muslims - called "commanding right and forbidding wrong." It obligates Muslim males to police behavior seen to be wrong and personally deal out the appropriate punishment as stated in scripture. In its mildest form, devout people give friendly advice to abstain from wrongdoing. Less mild is the practice whereby Afghan men feel empowered to beat women who are not veiled.

By publicizing the supposed sins of Messrs. Stone and Parker, Mr. Amrikee undoubtedly believes he is fulfilling his duty to command right and forbid wrong. His message is not just an opinion. It will appeal to like-minded individuals who, even though they are a minority, are a large and random enough group to carry out the divine punishment. The best illustration of this was demonstrated by the Somali man who broke into the offending Danish cartoonist's home in January carrying an axe and a knife.

Any Muslim, male or female, who knows about the "offense" may decide to perform the duty of killing those who insult the prophet.

Islamists seek to replace the rule of law with that of commanding right and forbidding wrong. With over a billion and a half people calling Muhammad their moral guide, it is imperative that we examine the consequences of his guidance, starting with the notion that those who depict his image or criticize his teachings should be punished.

In "South Park" this tyrannical rule is cleverly needled when Tom Cruise asks the question: How come Muhammad is the only celebrity protected from ridicule? Now we know why. – *Wall St. Journal*, April 27, 2010

Ms. Ali, a former member of the Dutch parliament, lives under protection in Washington, DC.

Five martyred in the Philippines

Five Christians were killed on the Philippine island of Mindanao in January and February. Three were killed in an attack on a farm, and a mother and daughter were killed at their home. All five were killed by Muslims who attacked them because they were Christians.

Muslims in the area hope attacks like these will drive Christians out of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) so they can take their livestock, crops and land.

Three were shot to death in the Jan. 13, 2010 attack at the farm. In February killers used machetes to hack to death Pastor Juliet Catalan and her 12-year-old daughter, Cheyenne, in the ARMM province of Maguindanao.

Voice of the Martyrs' field worker visited the victims' families to encourage them and to bring them \$5,000 in emergency aid.

-- Voice of the Martyrs, May 2010

The Sultan of SWAT: LAPD Chief Gates

By Dave Lindorff

Former Los Angeles police chief, Daryl Gates, who died last Friday of cancer, is credited with developing Special Weapons And Tactics (SWAT) units - those paramilitary police teams who break into houses with faces covered in ski masks in order to make arrests for often minor offenses.

But Gates was more than the Sultan of SWAT.

He was also a proponent of massive surveillance and spying. As a deputy chief Gates expanded the LAPD's notorious "Red Squad," known as the Public Disorder Intelligence Division (PDID), which had a sordid history going back into the 1920's.

I had my own experience with the PDID when I was an editor of the little alternative news weekly, the L.A. Vanguard, founded in 1976. We took on police brutality and especially the all-too-frequent shooting of unarmed citizens, and very quickly became a focus of the PDID. In fact our volunteer staff had been infiltrated by a PDID

officer named Connie Milazzo, who posed as a journalist wannabe.

In a class action suit against the LAPD in the early 1980s, after Milazzo and other Red Squad spies had been discovered infiltrating over 200 peaceful organizations we learned that the PDID was gathering dossiers on literally thousands of political activists, and also engaging in provocateur activities, trying to encourage peaceful groups to cross the line into criminal actions.

We learned too that our paper was actually sabotaged by the PDID, which operated under Gates' authority. We had hired a person at a considerable cost to sell advertising space. Much later after the paper had to shut down, she told us that her boss had told her to only pretend to try to sell ads. It turns out that the police had extorted her boss, saying if he prevented our paper from getting advertising, they'd drop drug charges against his son.

Gates is hailed too, for being the first police chief to add helicopters to the department's arsenal. It was a logical move. The LAPD already was widely seen as essentially a military organization, so why not have an air force too?

I remember how I would come home from the Vanguard office, and walking up the steps to my house I'd suddenly be bathed in a light as bright as day, as the helicopter would turn on its searchlight. It was a clear attempt at intimidation and harassment. During the day they often came to buzz over our office in the Crenshaw District, just to let us know they were watching.

Connie tried to get our sources. Her technique was simple. She would volunteer to stay in the office and answer the phone while the three or four editors went out to lunch.

The lawsuit, settled out of court because the PDID didn't want to have to disclose any more of its nefarious activities, cost the City of Los Angeles \$1.8 million, of which I received \$2,000.

But that check hardly compensates for his role in helping to undermine and destroy an award-winning but financially fragile investigative newspaper that was for the first time exposing the LAPD's role in killing unarmed citizens through excessive use of force and an official, but secret, department policy of shoot-to-kill.

Gates' obsession with violence and his use of the police as an occupying army in poor minority communities ultimately led to his undoing. His defense of the officers filmed beating the unarmed and

defenseless Rodney King, and his inept handling of the days of wide-spread rioting that followed the acquittal of those officers, led to his being forced to resign in 1992.

Chief Gates represented all that is wrong with police and law enforcement in America. Thanks to him, my little town of Upper Dublin, a mostly upper-middle-class suburb just north of Philadelphia, boasts a big gray SWAT panel truck, equipped with assault weapons and god knows what else, that gets shown off every year at an annual police and fire department show-and-tell day. And surely, his PDID was a harbinger of and even pioneer for the almost universal surveillance state that we now live in, with cameras popping up everywhere, our electronic communications constantly monitored, and police acting like the gestapo, instead of the civil servants they are supposed to be.

Indeed, Gates profited handily off the trend towards increased surveillance that he helped encourage, moving from his disgraced resignation from the LAPD to a lucrative post as chief executive of Global ePoint, a maker of digital video surveillance systems.

I for one will not miss him.

-- truthout Op-Ed 23 April 2010

To Reduce Them Under Absolute Despotism

By L. Neil Smith

Conservatives -- Republicans -
- are socialists.

True, they may desire to hold you down atop the stone altar and cut your still-beating heart out with an obsidian knife for a set of entirely *different* reasons -- national security, Judaeo-Christian traditions, "common" decency -- than the liberals or "progressives" or Democrats do, but to you, the important part is cutting your heart out with an obsidian knife, not whatever excuse they may offer for doing it

No matter which political party happens to be in power, ordinary people whose thinking and hard work maintain this civilization each and every day - never seem to get an even break with regard to their individual liberty or holding onto the fruits of their labor. It's why the late philosopher Robert LeFevre referred to Democrats and Republicans as "Socialist Party A" and "Socialist Party B".

Never forget that it was a Republican, Abraham Lincoln, who freed not a single, solitary slave, but merely nationalized slavery in the form

of income taxation and conscription, who presided over the violent deaths of 620,000 Americans to preserve a political abstract, to retain his political and military power, to enrich his mercantilist friends, and to suppress the basic human right of an entire region of the country to associate -- or disassociate -- with whomever they wished.

Never forget that it was a Republican, Richard Nixon, who imposed wage/price controls on what had been a relatively free economy, kept an enemies list, and quit when his minions were caught in a criminal act.

Never forget that it was a Republican, George W. Bush, who created the massively unconstitutional Department of Homeland Security, the no-fly lists, pushed through and signed the Constitution-shredding USA Patriot Act, plunged the country into two unnecessary wars, and created trillion-dollar deficits surpassed only by those of Barack H. Obama.

When we are forced to obtain and carry national identification, it will be Republicans who did it, in the name of eliminating illegal immigration.

As with any socialist culture, "some animals are more equal than others" in Sovietized America. Its elected *nomenklatura* in the House and Senate are paid between \$165,200 and \$212,100 every year, can look forward to pensions considerably larger than most of their constituents' salaries, and enjoy endless additional privileges and benefits.

Socialists, every one of them.

Coercion of any kind is tolerable. No censorship. No zoning. No conscription. No taxation. Government deserves no more money than it can raise with bake sales. Anything else involves setting the value of the individual's rights at something less than the needs or wants of the group. Or as Robert LeFevre put it, "To any extent that you have a 'public sector', to that extent, you have socialism."

-- The Libertarian Enterprise, Number 568, May 2, 2010, www.ncc-1776.org

How to fix Congress

Pass a Congressional reform act which includes the following provisions:

1. Term Limits:
 - a. 12 years only, in any capacity.
 - b. Two Six year Senate terms
 - c. Six Two year House terms
 - d. One Six year Senate term and three two Year House terms
2. No Pension Congress participates in Social Security under the same rules as the general public.
3. Congress can no longer vote themselves a pay raise.
4. Congress participates in the same health care plan as the general public. No preferential plans or treatment.
5. Congress is subject to and must abide by all the laws they impose on the general public.

-- From the Maine Republican Party platform approved May 8, 2010

Commentary: Serving in Congress is an honor, not a career. The Founding Fathers envisioned citizen legislators, who serve their term(s), then go home and back to work.

"You never know until you try" -- Get the World Court to shut down the gun industry

Six years after the Illinois Supreme Court dismissed his \$433 million lawsuit against the gun industry, Chicago Mayor Daley today called for a change of venue -- to the World Court normally reserved for disputes between nations and crimes against humanity.

Daley convinced more than a dozen of his counterparts from around the world to approve a resolution urging "redress against the gun industry through the courts of the world" in The Hague.

"This is coming from international mayors. They're saying, 'We're tired of your guns, America. ... We don't want those anymore because guns kill and injure people,'" Daley told a news conference at the U. of Illinois.

"If we ship over poison to a country, don't you think we should be

responsible for it? That's what they're saying: 'Be responsible for what you manufacture and sell in my country.' ... You have to think outside the box."

Mexico City Mayor Marcelo Ebrard Casauban noted that the Mexican government is waging a brutal war against drug cartels that get "85 percent" of their weapons from the United States.

Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter acknowledged that using the World Court is a long-shot. But, he said "you never know until you try" and it's worth a try to counter the political muscle and money of the National Rifle Association.

Nutter said, "People are being killed every day in the U.S with illegal weapons. I love the 2nd Amendment. [But], I have a 1st Amendment right not to be shot."

Daley's 1998 lawsuit accused the gun industry of creating a public nuisance by using irresponsible suburban gun shops to flood the city with guns that traffickers supplied to criminals.

The city and the county sought reimbursement for policing, emergency services and prosecutions tied to gun violence using nuisance laws normally reserved for polluters. In 2004, the state Supreme Court refused to create, what it called "an entirely new species of public nuisance liability."

-- City Hall Reporter, April 27, 2010

Gun-hating mayor travels with gun-toting cops

N.Y. City mayor Michael Bloomberg takes along a police detail when he travels to Bermuda, flying two officers on his private plane and paying as much as \$400 a night to put them up at a hotel near his \$10 million house; the city pays their wages. Guns are largely forbidden in Bermuda -- even most police officers do not use them -- but the mayor's guards have special permission to carry weapons. A spokesman for the Police Department declined to comment.

-- New York Times, April 23, 2010

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